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WORK

—FOR THE—

COLORED WOMEN

—OF THE—

SOUTH,

By Mrs, B. T. Washington.

NORMAL SCHOOL PREES,
TUSKEGEE, ALA·
1894.

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BY MRS. B. T. WASHINGTON.

Preface.

For the past two months, with the assistance of Dr. Hallie T. Johnson and Mrs. Estelle Penney, I have been gathering in the country women of this vicinity and together we have given and received practical suggestions as to the ways in which the homes of the country women may be improved and made happier, and out of these meeting has grown the desire with some of us to have these talks or hints put into printed form. This little pamphlet may fall into the hands of those who will not object to hearing something of these meetings.

The country women around this vicinity are similar to others of the same class; they get tired of the scenery of the country; they want to see new faces and new things, they do and should come to town often enough to vary their monotonous life. Since it is a fact that the country women come into the towns and villages, we felt that they could spend at least a part of the day with us in getting hints for their home-life. We take Saturday for these meetings because the great majority of country women take Saturday for their sight-seeing and shopping so they accomplish two things in one visit.

Our meetings are held in the upper story of a store, on the main street, thus making it possible for every woman who comes into town to come and spend an hour in listening to practical talks and reach her wagon before her husband has time to leave town.

We talk in the plainest and freest way possible, about anything, no matter how small it may seem, that in any way pertains to the average colored woman and we feel that we are on the right track to help these our country sisters and because of this fact we put into print some of our suggestions, so that the lady teachers all over the South may realize that they have a work to do for the women whose children they teach.

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The Home---How to Care for It.

—BY—

Mrs. Nathan B. Young,

TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA.

Three of the sweetest words in our language are; Mother, home, and heaven. It is my plan to offer a few words of advice to Mothers, regarding the home, how to keep it tidy and pleasant.

Some may say, "My home can-not be made tidy and pleasant, because I have only one or two rooms, and have nothingwith which to make them comfortable and inviting"

Dear sisters, you can make even a one-room cabin clean and neat. It is a hard task I grant, but it can be done. A single log cabin can be made cheery and bright. Pray how can this be done? You are ready to ask. I will tell you. Plan for your home; arrange such furniture as you have more tastefully and more conveniently. Have regular days for certain work, and a place for everything. Then keep everything in its place. You may say that, you have not the time to put and to keep each thing in its place. But do you not spend half of your time looking for things placed here and there—everywhere?

Let me give you a hint or two. Do not hang your clothes all around the house, but make a frame about the size of a door, drive nails in it, and place it in a part of the house that is not often used. Hang a calico curtain across this frame. Thus you have a cheap wardrobe. Put the shoes at the bottom, with toes turned toward the wall. Keep the curtain down to protect the clothes and to give a better appearance to the room.

Do not put things under the bed; I have seen homes in which the bed served as a closet, as a chicken house

Food and Cooking.

MRS. ADELLA HUNT LOGAN,

TUSKEGEE, ALA.

Many persons complain of their food, saying there is too little of it, there is lack of variety, it is too rich or not rich enough, and others, though they may not express the complaint, feel that their food is not fine enough. Great patience should be felt for each of these classes of grumblers, and the house-keeper and cook should study to remove the causes for such complaints.

QUANTITY.

In this country and in this age there are many more people overfed than underfed, but in some cases there is actual want and suffering. Where this istrue the shortage often falls to the lot of the aged and the children Nothing can be sadder than that state of a family which does not feed the old folks and the children well. The aged need the stimulating effects of nutritious food to sustain their failing powers. Children eat a great deal because of their constant exercise in open air. Working men need strong food but not just the kind nor such large amounts as some take

Nursing mothers need abundant food, but their diet should be light and nourishing for the sake of their own health and more particularly for the best development of their babies. If the supply of food is actually too small then by some honest means, no matter how hard, more should be provided. In many instances people complain of too little to eat, when the only trouble is they have

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formed the habit of eating too much. The body needs just so much food, any more is a burden rather than a necessity. It is a good rule to rise from the table just a little hungry.

Scarcity is often due to poor management. The woman who makes the most of all that she has and can get will be spared the pain of seeing her family hungry and will not be criticised for lack of

VARIETY.

Out of the same materials commonly found in all households a great many different dishes can be made.

BREAD.

A little skill and industry mixed with a desire to give pleasure to the family can place on the breakfast table, several different kinds of bread in a single week. All of these may be made of the same flour or meal and lard used by many cooks to make but one kind of bread, and that one is often a very mean kind. If corn meal must be used all or most of the time, it will be better for the one who prepares it and for those who eat it, to change the way of preparing it occasionally. Very good things sometimes grow tiresome because seen or had too often. Eggs are to be had by most country people; many have milk also with these two valuable ingredients at hand, why mix corn meal with salt and water only? There seem to be better reasons for it than custom, and that it is the easiest way. Corn bread properly made is good for the system and pleasant to the taste, but dry and mean enough when carelessly made and poorly baked.

Flour is used by most women to make a bread that is hard to digest and is also expensive—that is biscuit.

In many families biscuit appears on the tabls three times a day, and such persons think they are living well. Far from it! Biscuits eaten hot are very hard to digest; cold they are not good. They are expensive, first, because of the great amount of lard needed to make them "short" and, second, because of the milk and soda or baking power used to make them light and in the third place the time and wood comsumed in making and baking bread three times a day is more than should be given to it.

Instead of biscuit, light bread should be made the chief kind. Keep this on hand all the time and you are always ready to give a lunch of buttered bread or a

sandwich with a cup of tea to your husband, who may be called away before meal time or to the friend who may drop in hungry. Make this bread of only the best flour; it si always the cheapest. The yeast will cost very little and a small piece of lard is enough for each baking of two or three quarts of flour. The loaves should be kept in the oven with a good steady heat for at least one hour. When light bread is light, nicely baked, sliced thin, and served in a well lighted room, on a table spotlessly clean and beautified by a vase of fragrant flowers, the poor have at least one thing for tea that is as fine as the rich can have in that line. It is the best there is to be had. It is as much of a pleasure to make as to eat such bread.

For breakfast it is well to have fresh, hot bread, such as corn-muffins, griddle cakes, waffles, biscuit, toast or rolls. One kind at a time will generally do.

Bread being the staff of life, a great deal of it must be used, but it is possible and wise to stretch it out by using such vegetables as grits, rice, peas, beans, potatoes and sweet potatoes. The breakfast table should be supplied at least one of these and some good, sensible housewives train their families to get along on little or no bread for dinner because of the use of such vegetables.

Few women know the value of oat-meal. A good quality of this can be bought for five cents per pound. Boiled gently for one hour it forms a nice paste or mush which should be eaten with sugar and new milk or cream. Oat-meal is so good for children although they may not like it at first they should be trained to eat it. With a breakfast of oatmeal and milk, grits and gravy children will need very little bread and no

MEAT.

Country people eat too much and too little meat. Too much of the wrong and too little of the right kind. In the days of slavery bacon was considered as the only kind of meat fit for a laborer to eat. This view is still held by many men, but it is a very mistaken idea. Bacon may do to eat but it is very unwise, indeed, to eat very much of it. So much as the average farmer's family consumes is bad for their health and also for their pockets.

Beef is the best of meats, mutton is health-giving, kid is cheap, and chicken may be had by any industrious family living in the country.

Eggs contain so much of the best of food that they may sometimes take the place of meat. Care must be taken in cooking them or more harm than good will result They should be eaten soft, that is about half done and quite hot. Frying is the worst way to cook eggs especially when lard or bacon grease is used for the purpose.

VEGETABLES.

It is most unfortunate that we should regard the common things about us as useless or beneath our notice. In his vision St Peter was warned against calling anything common or unclean which God had made. A noted professor of science has recently declared that there is a wonderful amount of nutrition in speckled peas, and yet many people consider peas as good cow feed, but not good for table use. This is a crop easy to raise and cheap. These two points should commend them to poor people, but that is not all, peas, of any kind, are good, white ones are the best.

One crop or another of the several kinds of greens should be kept on hand all the time.

Spring vegetables should be prepared and eaten with care. They should be fully ripe, and eaten by well persons only, otherwise they are apt to give rise to stomach and bowel disorders

These cautions must not be taken to mean "avoid vegetables." The system needs vegetable food, and it should be more generally used. With the small cost of seed and the pleasure, combined with the good that comes to one's health from that kind of work, every family woman should have her garden and be able to get something out of it at all seasons.

FRUITS.

Farmers are the folks of all others, who ought to have fruits served on their tables very often. But in most cases they do not use fruits at all as a part of their meals. Few things are nicer for breakfast and supper than fresh blackberries. These are to be had for only the picking, and when well ripened, it takes very little sugar to make them delicious. Canning of fruits require only a little work and skill. After the first year's expense for jars, the cost is very small, and by this process you may have fruits almost like resh the year round.

Drying fruits, which many country women do nicely, is a very good thing. It is easy to do, and helps out many a meal. Preserves and jellies are luxuries, but they should not be so scarce that the children will be tempted to steal them. Better not have such things at all.

DRINKS.

Milk is the drink for children. It is good for grown folks, to be sure, but almost indispensible for children. A good cow is a great blessing to a family. No need to remark that the milk and butter should be handled with great nicety—all know that. Every one having the care of the dairy should put her knowledge of cleanliness into practice.

Coffee works a great deal of injury to the nervous system, especially when taken so strong, and in such large quantities as some women will have it It is a great mistake to let the cup of coffee take the place of the breakfast; better take the two together. Children should not be allowed to drink coffee at all. Tea is less harmful than coffee, and should be used sometimes, particular at night, instead of coffee. Never boil tea. Steeping for a few minutes is best. In many cases the water is complained of, when nature has not done anything against it. The trouble is man has not done anything for it. Wells should be deep, clean and covered. Springs should be 'fixed up" and kept in a first-class condition.

DESSERT

When the house-keeping fund is small, it is best not to attempt to have dessert very often. When they are made, it should be something so good and should be so nicely prepared and served, that it will be considered a treat.

GENERAL REMARKS.

To avoid waste, it is a good plan to measure everything used in cooking. Find just how much will do, cook that and no more. Sometimes food will be left over. Don't throw it to the chickens or pigs if it will pay better to use it on the table again. Made over dishes can be made about as good as fresh food, if only pains enough be taken.

Cold meat may be made into hash. It may be stewed with a little flour and butter to form a gravy, or the meat may have a little rice or chips of Irish po-

tatoes stewed with it. Sometimes bake the hash, sometimes serve it on toast. Always cut the meat very fine, season well and serve hot.

Another excellent rule is to live at least one day ahead. Don't wait until meal time, and then begin to wonder "what shall I have and how shall I cook it?" Settle those points before hand, and the bill of fare will be much better.

Good cooking has been called an art. Some want to class it as one of the fine arts. However that may be, it is a necessary work, and it is that branch of house-work that will bring more pleasure if it be well done, or more of everything the opposite of pleasure, if it be poorly done, than all the other departments of house-keeping combined. The best cooks do not consider their work hard. There is much work to be done in a well-ordered kitchen and dining-room, but it is not hard work.

Our cooks, as a class, should study more to improve. This work is done too thoughtlessly. The more intelligence you put into your kitchen work, the better results you will get out of it. A man who was growing rich by cultivating some very poor land, was asked what he mixed with that poor soil to have it bring such fine crops. He replied: "I mix brains with it." Now, if you will mix brains with your cooking efforts, then your husband will be able to say heartily, when he has finished each of your delightful meals, "Thank the Lord and bless the cook.

What Shall We do with Our Children?

—BY—

Mrs. Estelle Penney,

TUSKEGEE, ALA.

This question is one which is puzzling the rich and poor alike, wherever young blood is found. The rich man questions whether or not he is too indulgent, and is thus weakening the minds of his children; and the poor man has serious moments, when he wonders, if after all, he is not too hard on his young folks, and is robbing them of a great deal of the sunshine of life.

It is claimed by many that the young people of today are hard to manage, and some go so far as to say, that they are impudent, lazy, and an unprofitable set, wholly unlike the good children of long ago, who minded at a word, and were seen and not heard, and who would no more think of being "sassy" to old folks than they would think of sticking their heads in the fire. And in order to prove without a doubt that this is a wicked and godless generation, they invite us to visit the jails and chain-gangs, where we find the majority of the prisoners are young men and young women, and even children. I will admit that this is rather a dark picture, but fortunately for us, it is one of those shadow-pictures where the shadow is seen, but the real coloring and life are behind the curtain.

If our young people are as bad as some of our old folks try to paint them, where is our star of hope, and what will the future be? But the case is not so bad as some imagine; for there is even now a silver lining to this dark cloud. The past cannot afford to be at war with the present, for the present has the advantage. Fault-finding and condemning this fast age is not a remedy for these evils. Fathers and mothers may cherish sweet memories of the past, they will find

that they must live in the present, with its new ideas and grand and glorious advantages and privileges, such as the world has never before known. Old things have passed away, and we must not stand gazing after them but fall in line and try to keep up in the march of progress. If we do not, the children will go on without our guidance and protection, and perhaps come to grief.

Let us now consider some of the ways by which the young can be helped. If we could get the confidence of our children, so that they would take us for their best friends, half the battle would be won, and the devil would be cheated out of some of his best material. For example, after the day's work is done, and supper is over, let the children, with father and mother, gather around the fireside and tell the experiences of the day—let each have a chance to tell his story. Another way to win the confidence of young people is to take time and listen when they come with secrets that are very precious to them, but may seem like nonsense to you. Be true and never betray their trust, for if you do, you are not apt to be trusted again. Many a well-meaning mother has made the sad mistake of hushing up her child because it asked some question that reached far out into the mysteries of manhood and womanhood. I will give one instance: The little inquisitive mind wants to know about baby-land and where the babies come from. Some mothers call this an indecent question, and give the child an idea that it has done something very wrong to think of such a thing. Its mouth has been stopped, but the thinking goes on just the same. Thus the mother, with her false modesty, has set up a barrier between her and the child, which some day she will wish she could break down, and again look into the heart that was once so tender and true. Many a young man and woman might have been saved from lives of shame and disgrace, if they had been on confidential terms with their parents.

The matter of punishment is an important subject to be considered in our home rule, for preach, pray and exhort as we may, the children seem prone to wander, and must bear the yoke of their wrong-doing, and be taught that "the way of the transgressor is hard." Some parents are firm believers in the use of the rod; it is used with a free hand for every offense, great or small, the hickory is laid on. The child who accidentally breaks a dish, gets as many stripes as if he had told the blackest lie. This kind of discipline does more harm than good. It ruins the disposition, and by and by we will have a hardened wretch to deal with, and no amount of flogging, or kicking, or cuffing, or abusive language will have any effect upon him. Lying, stealing, disobedience and bad language are some

of the worst offenses, and ought, we all think, to have the severest punishment, but even then the sin or crime does not always cease. Oftentimes giving extra tasks of work to be performed is sufficient penalty for many of the childish misdemeanors. Another simple, but oftentimes effective mode of punishment, is to send the child off in a room, to be alone and think over its conduct. Children ought to love their homes, and feel there is no place like home, and some times parents are greatly grieved because their children seek pleasure and enjoyment every where else but at home. Our young men are off by the time they get their suppers—there is always some excuse for going out, when the real reason is, they are seeking amusement. Things around home are too dull. Very often the Saturday night frolic, which has been the scene of many fights, and even murders, has enticed our boy, and before we know it, he is walking the downward road. Some mothers and fathers cannot understand why, in spite of all their good advice to the young folks about bad company and about the safety of home, that they do not take heed and settle down contentedly We must do more than advise--we must do all in our power to make our homes so attractive that they will be like loadstone; so powerful that they can't get away from the magnet Study to out do the devil. Think of simple pleasures that cost nothing, but will be enjoyed by the family. Singing is a gift that our young people have, and it is always appreciated, but if families had more singing they would find it a power in bringing peace and love at home. Another simple pleasure is to give, occasionally, inexpensive suppers or teas, and invite a few of the young friends.

Last, but not least. I would call attention to the religious training of our children. The place to begin is at the mother's knee. She ought to give them their first ideas of God as our Heavenly Father, who loves and watches over us at all times. Some little ones have such strange notions about God, that I am led to believe that parents have not given the right kind of religious instruction. Our ministers neglect the lambs and cramb the sheep, and and so the young in the flock starve. Fathers and mothers go to church on Sunday and sing God's praise and get happy, but their children are many times at home or at the neighbors. doing everything but keeping the sabbath day holy. We are told to train up the child in the way he should go, and christian parents must lead their children tenderly and lovingly in all right living. We must teach by precept and example, and watch and pray for their good, and God will bless our efforts.

What to Wear and How to Dress.

——BY——

MRS. B. T. WASHINGTON.

TUSKEGEE, ALA.

Few subjects are of more practical importance to women than the subject of What to Wear, and How to Dress

Many women who are some what advanced in age and even others not so far advanced have the mistaken idea that they can dress as carelessly as they please and that their age will excuse them. Again, a woman too often thinks, that now I am married and a mother and so no one cares how I dress. Let us remember that our husbands, our children, and even our friends are just as glad to see us neatly and becomingly dressed as if we were many years younger.

As the mother is so are the children and often the husband. As a woman grows older and becomes a mother she will be obliged to divide her wardrobe with her daughters, but she should be careful to see that she does not give up all, so that a person meeting her and her daughter would mistake the mother for the servant of the daughter.

Every woman in selecting a dress, a hat, a pair of shoes or any other article of clothing should be guided by two or three simple things; first, her make-up, color, size, whether she is a short person or a tall one, etc. No woman should rush headlong into a store to purchase an article of clothing simply because it is pretty and a near neighbor has something like it; what is true of purchasing an article of clothing is also true of the making of it. Do not make a dress or purchase a hat according to the

fashion of one worn by a friend simply because it looks well on that friend. It may not look so well on you. The same care should be exercised in buying a calico dress as in the purchase of a more costly one. A calico dress is the average dress and every woman should make a strong effort to have each year one neatly made calico dress. If she is a tall woman a little trimming in the form of a ruffle should be added to the skirt near the bottom: If, on the other hand, a short one, the skirt should be almost entirely plain. A tall and stout woman should not wear such figures as plaids, but should select stripes—these all come in calico prints in these days. A woman with a short waist should not wear a dress which requires a belt. If women would only consider it of sufficient importance to find out what is becoming to them they would make a more pleasing appearance.

There are two extremes to every woman, her head and her feet. Somewhere it has been said that if a man's hat is in good style it does not make much difference about the rest of his clothes. I should like to make this same remark in regard to woman, adding also that if her feet are neatly shod it will not matter greatly about the rest of her clothes. Good shoes and plain hats are cheap and certainly a woman makes a better appearance with her feet neatly dressed in a good shoe and her head dressed in a plain becoming hat than she does without them. These things are within reach of every woman, if she will only regard them of enough importance to secure them. Every woman should own a pair of gloves. As far back as we can remember women, are urged to wear gloves upon their hands—in the Bible it is spoken of in more places than one.

No woman can afford to go without a pin at her throat. Not necessarily an expensive one but something which will give to the throat a close and neat appearance.

Many women think that the arrangement of the hair concerns no one but themselves. It concerns all womankind and it is the duty of each woman to so arrange her hair that no one can deny her right to an ownership in the civilization of the 19th Century.

It has for a long time been the custom among some women to wrap their hair in strings, thus hiding that which is our glory—namely our hair. This custom was practiced during the days of slavery, when there was not time given by the masters for combing the hair. Thank God! that day is slowly but surely passing away, and

women are now given the time to keep themselves decently dressed. How many women remember how careful was the master, who refused to give them time to comb their hair, to have his horse curried each day. It improved the looks of his horse, it improved the spirit of his horse; it would have had a similar effect upon his slave. This habit of wrapping the hair must be abolished as quickly as possible. Let us fight it until it is entirely wiped out. If the hair is too short to braid and pin at the back of the head, or to arrange in a knot at the back of the head, comb it back from the forehead and let it alone. This style may be varied by parting it in the middle or a little on the side of the head.

Women pay too little attention to the harmony of colors; not only as as pertains to the materials combined in a dress, a hat, etc., but also as pertains to the harmony of their own color with that of their clothing,

A fair woman with red complexion, should not wear bright red, bright yellow, etc., no more than should a dark woman wear light blue, pink or white. Have we not been women thirty years? And now can we not see that we must lay aside some of these customs which were thrust upon us by slavery, and which cling to us so closely that they seem almost our second nature? And do we not think it necessary to, at least, consider these things and try to find a rememedy for them?

In all ages, among all races of people, women have been, and are, expected to take the lead in correct ideas of dressing. Let us, then, not be too slow to begin to do our part.

Ventilation.

——BY——

Mrs. B. T. Washington,

TUSKEGEE, ALA.

Mothers who live in the country and who have open fireplaces, houses with large cracks in the floor or open places between the logs as they are laid on the walls, think very little of the ventilation of their homes or rather they imagine, that they receive all the air necessary through these openings and through the chimney. I acknowledge that we are blest in having open fire-places and that we get a certain kind of ventilation from these cracks in the top and side of our houses; but have we ever stopped to think that this is not ventilation in the sense that we understand this word. This is more of a draught and is very injurious to health. Ventilation in the best sense is letting in outside air which in turn drives out inside air thus purifying the room.

A GOOD RULE FOR VENTILATION.

Open both the windows and doors. The door of course being so situated that the air coming in will be from the outside. Always remember that there must be two currents of air in the process of ventilation. We may not open the door at night but we can secure these two currents of air just the same. Many rooms have windows made of planks and a hole bored in the top and one in the bottom of such windows will usually answer the purpose of ventilation. Then there is the window made of boards which slips up and down, and here again ventilation may be had by leaving a small place at the top and another at the bottom.

Many mothers do not think it important to air their beds, they get up and even before they dress make up their beds. It only takes a moment to understand how injurious and how dirty this habit is. During the night we have given off bad odors from the body, foul breath has been breathed into the bed clothing and if we do not give the bedding a proper airing we go back to bed the next night and inhale into our systems this filth. Mothers must secure their children and themselves against these harmful practices. Open the door and windows each day, the earlier the better, take off all the bedding, lay it on the backs of the chairs and give the mattress and bedding sufficient time to become well aired by following these directions you will sleep better and rise in the morning fresher and more able to accomplish the work of the day.

Once a week, at least, the curtained-wardrobe, safe, washstand, etc., should be thrown open and pure air allowed to pass freely through them, thus taking from the wearing clothes, the furniture, etc., odors which go into them from the food while it was cooking in open vessels. If we are obliged to prepare our meals in the same room in which we sleep and live we can, at least, get covers of either tin or wood or some other cheap material, so as to protect ourselves, clothing, and furniture from the odors which come from the food while it is being cooked.

Mothers, if you regard the matter of health of your children and your own health, if you regard the importance of cleanliness, sweetness, and purity, see to it that your homes receive attention in this matter of ventilation.

These "Practical Hints" are dedicated to the country women on Alabama farms.

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